(c) the steps taken by the Government to make the investments in the States as per the collections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c). The amount collected by Mutual Funds sponsored by nationalised banks during the last three calender years was about Rs. 4655.5 crores. The resources raised by mutual funds are invested in capital market securities such as shares and debentures and money market instruments. Most of these instruments are not Stat specific, hence amount of state-wise investment made out of the resources mobilised cannot be given. Mutual Funds adopt their own strategy in the matter of investment based on their commercial judgement. It is not intended to regulate state-wise deployment of funds collected by mutual funds.

Ships for Andaman and Nicobar Islands

*649. SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of ships required between Andaman & Nicobar Islands and the mainland;

(b) the number of ships operating there at present; and

(c) the steps being taken to meet the full requirement of ships in order to solve the problems faced by the people of Andaman and Nicobar Island?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) As per the assessment of Andaman & Nicobar Admn. the minimum number of passenger vessels required for catering to the passenger traffic movement on the mainland-Andman & Nicobar islands sector is four.

(b) and (c). Two passenger-cum-cargo vessels are available for operation on mainland-Andman service. Out of this, one vessel namely M. V. Nicobar has been temporarily withdrawn for operating the Haj service and this vessel is expected to resume operations on mainland-Andaman sector by end August, 1992. One new passenger-cum-cargo vessel namely M. V. Nancowry has been delivered in Poland on 31.3.92 and this vessel is expected to commence operations on the mainland-Andaman sector by early May, 1992. Another passenger-cum-cargo vessel, identical to M. V. Nicobar and M. V. Nancowry is on order with a Polish Shipyard but the delivery of the vessel is uncertain. Besides, in the Eighth Plan, A&N Administration has proposed reconditioning of the passenger-cum-cargo vessel M. V. Akbar for operation for another ten years and placing order for one new passenger-cum-cargo vessel with capacity to carry 1200 passengers and 1500 tonnes of cargo.

[*English*]

Employment In Handicraft Sector

*650. SHRI PRATAPRAO B BHONSLE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether some steps are envisaged to give greater thrust on employment avenues in the handicraft sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) and (b). The handicrafts industry is essentially employment intensive and export-oriented. The 8th Plan for the handicrafts sector aims to enhance the opportunities of income and employment